

## BOOK REVIEWS

**THIS PANEL BUSINESS.** By A. G. P. London : John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 1933. pp. 364. Price 10s. 6d.

AFTER reading this volume, one comes to the conclusion that a better title would be "This Panel Bungle." Everyone connected with it appears to bungle his job. Doctors, insurance companies, patients, etc., all seem to abuse of its privileges, and all would appear to have the same motto: "Ninepence for Fourpence."

The first part of the book opens with a chapter on "The Plight of the Medical Profession To-day," and here one might call in question the authority from which information is derived, namely, the daily press. An article in one of these papers on "Lean Days in Harley Street," by a "Physician," does not impress one as a reliable source. Large portions copied verbatim from such periodicals are represented as summing up certain present positions.

More impressive authorities are quoted in other parts of the book, and it is of importance to practitioners to know, for instance, that in 1931 there was one doctor in the British Isles to each 884 patients, whereas in France the figure is 1,690, Germany 1,560, and so on.

Abuses in the National Health Insurance scheme are reviewed throughout the ensuing chapters, and to the uninitiated such revelations are almost unbelievable. "A panel certificate may be regarded as so much money, even if it is only so much money as sickness benefit." The amusing story is related as told by a panel doctor, at the annual conference in 1930, of two men who wished to attend a cinema or football match, but had no money. It occurred to them that they could raise money by going to the panel doctor, from whom they could get a certificate. This procured, they went to a bookmaker or some such person, who advanced them five shillings!

Most of the better-known public medical services are dealt with, such as the Hospital Savings Association, Medical Contributory Service, friendly societies with "Closed Panels," and the British Medical Association "Open Panel for Consultants." The impression one gets in studying these is unmistakable, and can be summed up in the one word, "Beware."

Considerable thought has been devoted to the question of extending the panel to include "dependants," and the writer advises against this encroachment.

The book can be recommended to all interested in panel work of any sort, and certain aspects of this business have been brought to light which are as serious for the practitioner as they are arresting.

Constructive ideas are summed up in the last chapter, but I am afraid all will not meet with general approval.

**A SHORT HISTORY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.** By Arnold Sorsby, M.D., F.R.C.S. John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 1933. pp. 103. Price 3s. 6d.

DR. R. H. HUNTER, in 1925, had a small volume on the history of anatomy published by the Oxford House. The success of this book soon resulted in a second edition being called for, and the publishers, realizing the demand for short introductions to the more detailed histories of the medical specialities and ancillary sciences, have now brought out a series of such introductions. Volumes on surgery and dentistry have already been added to the one on anatomy, and the new volume on ophthalmology is a worthy successor to those written by Sir d'Arcy Power, Miss Lindsay, and Dr. Hunter.

Mr. Sorsby has written a book which has suffered surprisingly little from the necessary limitations of space. There are separate chapters on the anatomy, the physiology, and the pathology of the eye, and a very interesting account of British ophthalmology has been added. The introduction gives an excellent background of general medical history to the details of the history of ophthalmic specialization which follow.

This is a valuable addition to a series which is deserving of considerable success.